

Federal-State Market Improvement Program (FSMIP)

Grant Opportunity Announcement

Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)

Proposals Due 3:00 pm, Friday, March 16, 2012

Available Funding for 2012

FSMIP is funded by annual appropriations to the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), USDA. AMS announced that approximately \$1.2 million will be available for support for this program in fiscal year (FY) 2012. Approximately 25 projects are funded each year. The average grant award is \$50,000.

Eligibility

In accordance with authorizing legislation, FSMIP funds can be allotted to State Departments of Agriculture, State Agricultural Experiment Stations, and other appropriate State Agencies. State agencies under the authorizing legislation should assume the lead role in FSMIP projects, and use cooperative or contractual linkages with other agencies, universities, institutions, and producer, industry or community-based organizations, as appropriate. Multi-State projects are encouraged, as long as one State assumes the coordinating role, using appropriate cooperative arrangements with the other States involved.

Program Scope

FSMIP funds a wide range of applied research projects that address barriers, challenges, and opportunities in marketing, transportation, and distribution of U.S. food and agricultural products domestically and internationally. Eligible agricultural categories include livestock, livestock products, food and feed crops, fish and shellfish, horticulture, viticulture, apiary, and forest products and processed or manufactured products derived from such commodities.

Proposals may deal with barriers, challenges or opportunities manifesting at any stage of the marketing chain including direct, wholesale, and retail. Proposals may involve small, medium or large-scale agricultural entities but should potentially benefit multiple producers or agribusinesses. Proprietary proposals that benefit one business or individual will not be considered.

Proposals that address issues of importance at the State, regional or national level are appropriate for FSMIP. FSMIP also seeks unique proposals on a smaller scale that may serve as pilot projects or case studies useful as a model for others. Of particular interest are proposals that reflect a collaborative approach between the States, academia, the farm sector and other appropriate entities and stakeholders.

FSMIP's enabling legislation authorizes projects to:

- Determine the best methods for processing, preparing for market, packing; handling, transporting, storing, distributing, and marketing agricultural products.
- Determine the costs of marketing agricultural products in their various forms and through various channels.
- Assist in the development of more efficient marketing methods, practices and facilities to bring about more efficient and orderly marketing, and reduce the price spread between the producer and the consumer.
- Develop and improve standards of quality, condition, quantity, grade and packaging in order to encourage uniformity and consistency in commercial practices.
- Eliminate artificial barriers to the free movement of agricultural products in commercial channels.
- Foster new/expanded domestic/foreign markets and new/expanded uses of agricultural products.
- Collect and disseminate marketing information to anticipate and meet consumer requirements, maintain farm income, and balance production and utilization.

All proposals that fall within one or more of the above categories will be considered. In addition, FSMIP encourages State agencies to submit proposals that address the following objectives:

- Creating wealth in rural communities through the development of local and regional food systems and value-added agriculture.
- Developing direct marketing opportunities for producers, or producer groups.

[Click here for complete Guidelines & Submission Requirements](#)

Deadline for Submission to MDAR: Friday, March 16, 2012 by 3:00 pm

Send proposals via email to: Lisa Damon, lisa.damon@state.ma.us

[Click here](#) for more information or contact:

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